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Attorney Docket No. SCET 18.735 (100809-16268)

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Inventor: Toru KUWAHARA
Serial No.: 09/876,884
Filed: June 7, 2001
Title: APPARATUS AND METHOD...
Examiner: Jeffrey C. Pwu
Art Unit: 3628
Con. No.: 7823

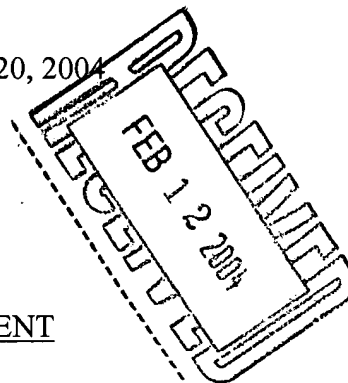
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January 20, 2004



INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

S I R:

In order to comply with discretionary rules 37 CFR §§1.97 and 1.98, attached hereto is a copy of Form PTO-1449 and a copy of the documents listed thereon. This document contains information in which the Examiner may consider to be important in deciding whether to issue a patent in the instant application.

As this statement is being filed prior to issuance of a first Office Action, no fee is due.

Also attached is a copy of a Notification of Reason for Refusal dated November 25, 2003 from the corresponding Japanese Patent Application. All of the documents listed in Form PTO-1449 appear in the Notification of Reason for Refusal.



As these documents are written in a language other than English, English Language abstracts are annexed thereto explaining their relevancy in accordance with 37 CFR §1.98(a)(3).


Each item of information contained in the information disclosure statement was first cited in a communication from a foreign patent office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing of this information disclosure statement.

The present Information Disclosure Statement is being submitted in compliance with 37 §CFR 1.56 as an Examiner might consider any cited document important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent, but the citation of each document is not to be construed as an admission that such document is necessarily relevant or prior art. No representation is intended that the cited documents represent the results of a complete search, and it is anticipated that the Examiner in the normal course of examination, will make an independent search and will determine the best prior art consistent with 37 CFR 1.104 (a), and in the course of such search will review for relevance every document cited on the attached form even if not initialed.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully solicited.

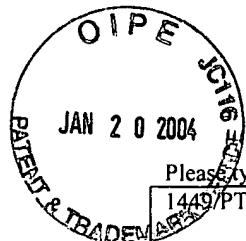
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Respectfully submitted,



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SCET 18.735(100809-16268)



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1449/PTO

U.S. Department of Commerce
Patent and Trademark Office

Application No. : 09/876,884

Filing Date : June 7, 2001

First Named Inventor: T. KUWAHARA

Group Art Unit : 3628

Examiner Name : J.C. PWU

Attorney Docket No. : SCET 18.735

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE
STATEMENT BY APPLICANT**

Sheet 1 of 1

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Cite No. ¹	U.S. Patent Document	Kind Code if known ²	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD- YYYY	Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear

FOREIGN DOCUMENTS

Examiner Initials	Cite No. ¹	Foreign Patent Document Office ³ Number ⁴ Kind Code ⁵ (if known)	Country	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Date of Publication of Cited Document MM-DD-YY/Y	Pages, Columns Lines Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		10-078989	JP	FUJITSU LTD	03/24/1998	
		09-212742	JP	OMRON CORP	08/15/1997	
		11-345371	JP	M & C SYSTEM:KK	12/14/1999	
		10-154274	JP	NEC CORP	06/09/1998	

Other Prior Art-Non Patent Literature Documents

Examiner Initials	Cite No.	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), data, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, country, where published, source.	Applicant check here if English language translation attached
Examiner Signature		Date Considered	

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¹Unique citation designation number. ²See attached Kinds of U.S. Patent Documents. ³Enter Office that Issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST.3). ⁴For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. ⁵Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST.1* if possible. * Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.

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